

## Targeted Employability Support for Higher Education (HE) Students: 2025/26 to 2026/27 Delivery Plans and 2025/26 allocations

**Date:** 14 August 2025

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**To:** Heads of higher education institutions in Wales  
Principals of further education institutions in Wales funded directly by Medr for HE provision

**Respond by:** 19 September 2025

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### Summary:

This publication sets out Medr's requirements for the submission of two-year delivery plans covering the period 2025/26 to 2026/27 for those HE providers currently in receipt of funding for Targeted Employability Support for HE Students. It announces the 2025/26 academic year (AY) budget of £2m for this support and details providers' financial allocations. It also includes the timeline for submission of delivery plans, payments and monitoring for 2025/26 and attaches the delivery plan template.

## Publication summary

1. This publication sets out Medr's requirements for the submission of two-year delivery plans covering the period 2025/26 to 2026/27 for higher education (HE) providers currently in receipt of funding for Targeted Employability Support for HE Students. It announces the 2025/26 academic year (AY) budget of £2m for this support and details providers' financial allocations. Funding for 2026/27 academic year will be subject to Medr's budget.
2. This funding should be used to develop the employability skills of students studying HE courses who are under-represented in HE as a result of social, cultural, economic or organisational factors as defined in the [Tertiary Education and Research \(Wales\) Act 2022](#).
3. Delivery plans should build on progress made in the previous three years of funded activity, providing flexible and bespoke provision to students from under-represented groups to equip them with the social and financial capital to help them have a positive outcome after graduation. Activity should be targeted, take account of the student voice and be delivered in collaboration with a variety of partners including student services and employers, with the aim of removing barriers to employability and empowering students to take ownership of navigating their future career paths.

### 2025/26 allocations

Provider	Total funding (£)
University of South Wales	325,261
Aberystwyth University	154,148
Bangor University	150,304
Cardiff University	330,000
University of Wales Trinity Saint David	152,469
Swansea University	330,000
Cardiff Metropolitan University	238,931
Wrexham University	100,000
The Open University in Wales	176,503
Grŵp Llandrillo Menai	32,385
Grŵp NPTC Group	5,000
Gower College Swansea	5,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,000,000</b>

4. 2025/26 provider allocations have been calculated using the latest verified HESA data for 2023/24 according to the funding methodology outlined in paragraphs 37-41 of this publication.
5. 2025/26 first tranche payments will be made on approval of delivery plans and end of year monitoring for 2024/25.

## Timeline

6. We require universities and Grŵp Llandrillo Menai to:
  - Submit delivery plans using **Annex A** and **Annex B** to [rachel.ogorman@medr.cymru](mailto:rachel.ogorman@medr.cymru) by 19 September 2025.
  - Submit monitoring reports to us in February 2026 and September 2026 (Medr will send individualised templates to providers separately).
7. We require Gower College Swansea and Grŵp Colegau NPTC to:
  - Submit delivery plans using **Annex C** to [rachel.ogorman@medr.cymru](mailto:rachel.ogorman@medr.cymru) by 19 September 2025.
  - Submit a monitoring report to us in September 2026 (template to be sent separately).

## Introduction

1. This publication sets out Medr's requirements for the submission of two-year delivery plans covering the period 2025/26 to 2026/27 for those HE providers currently in receipt of funding for Targeted Employability Support for Students. It announces the 2025/26 academic year (AY) budget of £2m for this support and details providers' financial allocations. It also includes the timeline for submission of delivery plans, payments and monitoring for 2025/26 and attaches the delivery plan template.

## Policy context

2. The [Tertiary Education and Research \(Wales\) Act 2022](#) (TER Act) was passed by the Senedd on the 28 June 2022 and received Royal Assent on 08 September 2022. The TER Act places a strategic duty on Medr to promote equality of opportunity through the provision of support for students finishing courses of Welsh tertiary education who are members of under-represented groups<sup>1</sup> to continue their tertiary education, find employment or start a business.
3. Medr's [Strategic Plan](#) sets out its response to the Welsh Government's strategic priorities for tertiary education and research, which includes aims to focus tertiary education around the needs of the learner, and to create a flexible and joined-up tertiary system where everyone can acquire the skills and knowledge they need for a changing economy and society.
4. Our [Operational Plan](#) sets out the activities that we will carry out to meet this strategic aim, including how we will work with providers to ensure they are enhancing the employability of learners in Wales, monitoring effectiveness of current activity and scoping future activity. This includes the Targeted Employability Support scheme as one of the mechanisms for delivery.

## Aim of the funding

5. The Targeted Employability Support for Students funding enables HE providers to support the employability of students studying HE courses who are under-represented in HE as a result of social, cultural, economic or organisational factors. This funding, therefore, aligns with Medr's strategic duties, including promoting equality of opportunity and a sustainable and innovative economy.
6. Activity must be focused on the minority of students who require additional assistance over and above that offered through core provision to the whole student body, within and outside the curriculum. The support should be targeted to students furthest from the labour market to equip them to achieve a positive outcome when they graduate. It should help them to reach their potential and achieve their goals and aspirations. Longer term, we expect the impact of this funding to be evidenced through a narrowing of the differential employment outcomes reported through the [Graduate Outcomes Survey](#).

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<sup>1</sup> The Tertiary Education and Research Act sets out that under-represented groups are groups specified in the terms and conditions that are under-represented in relevant education as a result of social, cultural, economic or organisational factors.

7. This funding aligns with the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) goals and ways of working, and key principles of the Act are embedded in the requirements for this funding.

### **2025/26 to 2026/27 requirements**

8. Medr's expectations and requirements for the next two academic years are set out below. Activity should:
- i. build on progress made since 2022/23, taking account of Medr's previous monitoring feedback and providers' evaluation of 2024/25 activity to inform future delivery;
  - ii. be targeted, aimed at developing the employability of students under-represented in HE as a result of social, cultural, economic or organisational factors and considered furthest from the labour market, such as students who lack social and financial capital;
  - iii. be flexible and student-led, tailored to the circumstances and requirements of the individual student;
  - iv. identify barriers to developing a student's employability so that support is targeted appropriately and levels the playing field for the students supported;
  - v. build confidence and empower students supported to take ownership of their employability;
  - vi. build on providers' activity to widen access to higher education, by supporting students under-represented in relevant education as a result of social, cultural, economic or organisational factors to maximise their opportunities for a positive employment outcome;
  - vii. form part of a joined-up approach to developing the employability of the students, which takes their well-being and other considerations into account;
  - viii. be developed and delivered in collaboration with partners such as student support services, Students' Unions and employers;
  - ix. ensure it takes account of the views and experiences of students;
  - x. be preventative by identifying and supporting the students in need of this additional employability support before they leave higher education (however, refer to paragraph 19-21 in relation to the support extended to a limited number of graduates).

### **Under-represented Groups**

9. The funding must support individuals who are studying a higher education qualification at a provider in Wales who are from under-represented groups. In addition, support should be targeted at those individuals considered furthest from the labour market who are in need of additional employability support. Medr is working to define those groups considered under-represented in education due to social, cultural, economic or organisational factors, but until further guidance is provided, we consider under-represented groups in HE will continue to include, but not be limited to:

- disabled students;
  - students with a mental health condition;
  - neurodivergent students (for example, students with autism, dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD));
  - students who are estranged from their families;
  - students who are care experienced;
  - students from Black, Asian or ethnic minority backgrounds<sup>2</sup>;
  - students with caring responsibilities, including parental responsibilities;
  - students who are refugees or asylum seekers;
  - students from an area of deprivation (i.e. the bottom two quintiles of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD));
  - students from an area of low HE participation (i.e. bottom two quintiles of POLAR 4);
  - students from low income families;
  - students who are first in their family to attend university;
  - students who identify as LGBTQ+;
  - students from Gypsy, Roma or Traveller backgrounds<sup>3</sup>;
  - commuter students, i.e. students who live in their family home and travel on a daily basis to their higher education provider to study.
10. Providers are required to set out in their delivery plans the under-represented groups they will prioritise for this support, including any data or evidence base to demonstrate additional need. We expect these groups to align with those identified in regulated institutions' fee and access plans and widening access strategies or equivalent to promote equality of opportunity. All students supported should identify with at least one of the under-represented groups set out in a provider's delivery plan, as well as demonstrating that they are in need of additional employability support.
11. The funding should be used to support HE students of all ages, studying on a full- or part-time basis.

## Employability activities

12. Whilst providers have flexibility to build their provision and offer to best meet the needs of their student demographic, we expect that support should consist of, at a minimum:
- mentoring;

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<sup>2</sup> Medr recognises the limitations associated with references to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. Eight universities in Wales have been awarded the [Race Equality Charter](#) in 2025. The Charter helps universities to identify and address barriers facing Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff and students, while also providing a framework for action and improvement. It also responds to the expectations set out in [Welsh Government's Anti-racist Wales Action Plan](#).

<sup>3</sup> This description is aligned with, and will contribute towards, the goals set out in the Welsh Government's [Anti-racist Wales Action Plan: 2024 update](#).

- a blended delivery of a range of employability activities, including entrepreneurship support;
- signposting / supported access to each university's core employability, careers guidance, enterprise and well-being provision;
- provision of funding for costs associated with the development of the student's employability, in line with the support offered by the HE provider and articulated in the Delivery Plan. See paragraph 13 for guidance on this;
- work related experiences, in line with the needs of the student. See paragraphs 14-15 for more guidance on this.

## **Provision of funding**

13. We expect providers to offer funding for costs associated with the development of employability to students. This will address barriers which either prevent students from engaging fully with the activities offered or develop the employability of the student, in line with each provider's Delivery Plan. In addition:
  - funding should be used where there is a clear rationale, agreed by the student and the provider;
  - providers are required to ensure there are robust processes for assessing and approving funding, including recording how the funding:
    - removes the student's barriers;
    - moves the student closer to the labour market;
    - is aligned to the plans for that student; and
    - provides additionality (i.e. how it enables the student to undertake activity they would not be in a position to without it);
  - the impact of the funding must be reviewed as part of the distance travelled assessment;
  - providers must explore if there are other sources of funding available in the first instance.

## **Work related experiences**

14. Research shows a strong correlation between students who have experiences of work with better graduate outcomes<sup>4</sup>. We expect providers, therefore, to continue to source a variety of work related experiences for students who would benefit from employer engagement. This should be informed by student need, and will offer students who may not have the social or financial capital with the opportunity to acquire practical experience, develop links with employers, and / or learn more about a sector, career path or job role from employers. In addition, this engagement should help higher education providers to continue to demonstrate to employers the benefits of diversifying their workforce.
15. Providers must ensure that work related experiences organised for students through this support do not duplicate or displace existing provision, either that offered by

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<sup>4</sup> For example, [Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education \(TASO\)](#)



themselves (as part or outside the curriculum) or through other programmes. Providers must also ensure that activity operates in line with Subsidy Control rules where relevant.

## **Student voice**

16. Student voice is key in assessing quality and achieving continuous improvement. By taking account of the views of students, providers are able to drive improvements in student outcomes and destinations. Whilst we recognise providers are capturing the feedback of students engaged in this support, they should continue to consider mechanisms through which to capture the view of students more broadly than those supported through this funding. Students should be involved in the co-creating of delivery plans, and in the evaluation and ongoing review of activity. This will ensure a provider's offer will continue to evolve so that it effectively meets student need. Furthermore, we expect plans to be developed in collaboration with, and endorsed by, Student Unions.
17. Medr plans to establish a learner voice forum, to ensure we are able to take account of learner views and priorities, along with broader feedback on the extent to which learner needs are being met by providers across the sector. This will include how learners' views about the quality of their tertiary education are considered and contribute to improvement planning.

## **HE students studying in FE institutions under sub-contractual arrangements**

18. In line with our regulatory position, universities are responsible for making this support accessible to their franchised students. We expect universities, therefore, to review their franchised provision to establish the need for this support. Universities should take a proportionate approach to engaging franchised students, by building on the progress made in the previous delivery plan periods and considering further innovative ways to engage those franchised students who are furthest from the labour market who would benefit from this support. We expect this to be set out in the Delivery Plans for AYs 25/26 and 26/27 and we will monitor the number of franchised students supported.

## **Graduate engagement**

19. This funding is intended to provide preventative support, to equip students in most need with the knowledge, skills, confidence and contacts to gain a positive outcome on graduation. However, we acknowledge that some students may not be in a position to engage with this support whilst studying. In the first instance, graduates<sup>5</sup> should be signposted to the most appropriate support for their needs, including a provider's core offer to their graduates. We will permit providers, however, to support graduates where core services or further dialogue indicate that a graduate is:

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<sup>5</sup> For the purposes of this support, we define a graduate as an individual who has graduated at the point of first contact. Where students continue to be supported for a period after graduation, they should be reported as students in monitoring. We expect this will apply to a limited number of students only.



- furthest from the labour market; and
- identifies with an under-represented group as set out in a provider's delivery plan; and
- would benefit from enhanced employability support.

20. Providers that support graduates must ensure that:

- the proportion of graduates (i.e. individuals who have left their HE provider at the point of contact) does not exceed 10% of the total number of individuals supported; and
- the support provided does not extend beyond 15 months from the date of graduation. After this time they should be signposted to other provision, as necessary.

21. We will monitor the number of graduates supported on both a cumulative and in-year basis as well as the timeframe of support in the Interim Monitoring and End of Year Reports. We will then assess the impact of these restrictions.

## Welsh language

22. In addition to meeting statutory requirements in relation to the Welsh Language Standards, we expect providers to increase the use of Welsh through this activity. This will include, where appropriate, promoting the employability benefits of the Welsh language to students and employers and increasing student and employer engagement through the medium of Welsh. Providers are therefore encouraged to create work related experiences which expose students to use of the Welsh language in various ways, as appropriate, to meet and stimulate employer and student demand. We will require providers to report the number of students engaging in aspects of support through the medium of Welsh in monitoring reports.

## Collaborative activity

23. Medr's [Strategic Plan](#) sets out our vision for the next five years, which includes working in close collaboration with our partners, as well as our strategic duty to promote collaboration and coherence. Encouraging collaboration is, therefore, a key commitment of Medr and it aligns with the ways of working of the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#). We require providers to continue the constructive cross sector collaborative work fostered in the area of careers and employability over the years.

24. Collaboration should add value to each provider's own delivery, and provide benefits and / or economies of scale to students, employers and providers. It should be through the lens of employability support and equality of outcomes for students from under-represented groups, and should complement other HE sector collaboration in this area.

25. We require the Association of Graduate Career Advisory Services (AGCAS) Cymru to provide oversight of the collaborative activity, steering it so that it delivers positive

outcomes for or enhances knowledge of students, employers or providers, and responds to the requirements and expectations described in this publication.

26. Should providers choose to contribute a proportion of their allocation to a collaborative activity fund, we require AGCAS Cymru to inform us of its intended use, including how it aligns with the principles set out within this guidance and how they have secured strategic level buy in from each provider for the proposed use of the funds. In addition, we expect that the benefits of the collaboration are captured by providers and reported to us over AYs 25/26 and 26/27 through our monitoring processes.
27. In line with Medr's strategic duty to promote collaboration and coherence, we require HE providers to consider ways in which they may be able to collaborate with other tertiary providers in relation to employability, such as the Employment and Enterprise Bureaus in FE colleges.

## **GO Wales: Student Employability branding**

28. The GO Wales brand must be retained for external-facing activity, i.e. for engagement with employers and any cross-sector collaboration. Please contact us should you require the GO Wales: Student Employability logo, or require a copy of the brand guidance. In addition, providers can continue to signpost, as appropriate, to the [GO Wales Student Employability](#) website.

## **Impact assessment**

29. We expect providers' delivery plans to take account of equality and intersectionality through regular review and updates of their Equality Impact Assessment of this funding, to ensure that they remain relevant, and the impact of provider approaches has been fully considered. We require information on how any amendments to the Impact Assessments have shaped Delivery Plans for AYs 25/26 and 26/27.

## **Outcomes and measuring impact**

30. We will continue discussions with providers on measures and other ways to assess the impact of this funding, and will require a number of case studies proportionate to the level of funding received to illustrate activity and impact with the End of Year Report.
31. We also require providers to continue to record which students have been supported through this funding on the HESA student record so that, longer term, we can track the impact of the funding through the Graduate Outcomes data.<sup>6</sup> The outputs and outcomes of this funding continue to be:
  - the number of students supported;

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<sup>6</sup> To indicate a student is being supported as part of Medr's Targeted Employability Support funding, 021 must be entered in the student initiative identifier field [STUINITID](#) on the HESA student record. This code should be used for students who were supported at any point during the reference period.

- the number of students engaged in work related experiences<sup>7</sup>; and
- the number of students who consider their employability has improved to the point that they no longer require enhanced employability support.

32. Providers can specify additional outputs and / or outcomes in their Delivery Plans, however this is not mandatory.

## Funding

33. The total budget available to support this activity for the period from 1 August 2025 until 31 July 2026 is £2m. 2026/27 financial allocations are subject to confirmation of Medr's budget and will be allocated using the latest HESA data available according to the funding methodology set out in paragraphs 37 to 41. We aim to inform providers of their 2026/27 allocations in late spring 2026.

34. 2025/26 provider allocations are presented in the table set out below, using the latest verified HESA data for 2023/24.

Provider	2025/26 funding (£)
University of South Wales	325,261
Aberystwyth University	154,148
Bangor University	150,304
Cardiff University	330,000
University of Wales Trinity Saint David	152,469
Swansea University	330,000
Cardiff Metropolitan University	238,931
Wrexham University	100,000
The Open University in Wales	176,503
Grŵp Llandrillo Menai	32,385
Grŵp NPTC Group	5,000
Gower College Swansea	5,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,000,000</b>

35. We will continue to fund Further Education institutions (FEIs) to support students studying HE provision funded directly by Medr. We will, therefore, provide funding in line with the methodology in paragraphs 37 to 41 to Grŵp Llandrillo Menai.

36. However, given the small numbers of students studying HE provision funded directly by Medr at Grŵp NPTC and Gower College Swansea, we will provide a set amount of funding to enable them to continue to extend Employment and Enterprise Bureau activity to those students.

<sup>7</sup> Providers should report work related experiences they have arranged for the student against this outcome, but we separately welcome providers indicating any work related experiences they have facilitated students to arrange themselves, in monitoring reports.

## **Funding methodology**

37. Allocations are calculated on a headcount of each provider's proportion of fundable widening access students, of all domiciles, and levels, who are studying at an intensity of >50%, including franchised students, on the basis that students studying at less than this intensity are more likely to be in employment.
38. Widening access students are defined as students:
  - with a disability; or
  - from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic group – UK domiciled only; or
  - care leavers; or
  - from an area of deprivation (Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2019 quintiles 1 or 2 for all undergraduates); or
  - from an area of low HE participation – POLAR4 (participation of local areas) quintiles 1 or 2 for full-time undergraduates aged 20 or younger at the beginning of their course; ADULTHE (proportion of working age adults with HE level qualifications as measured by 2011 census) quintiles 1 or 2 for full-time undergraduates aged 21 or older at the beginning of their course and all part-time undergraduates); or
  - with parents with no HE qualifications – UK domiciled undergraduates only.
39. For universities, the funding model incorporates a floor of £100,000, to ensure minimum capacity for delivering activity, and a ceiling of £330,000. For Grŵp Llandrillo Menai, we have included a floor of £25,000, which takes account of the number of students studying HE courses which are funded directly by Medr as well as providing a minimum capacity for staffing to deliver activity.
40. The allocation was calculated on a pro rata basis and then the floor and ceiling were applied. The money deducted from providers above the funding ceiling exceeded the additional money required to bring providers up to the funding floor. In order to maintain a total funding amount of £2 million, surplus budget was redistributed across providers between the funding floor and funding ceiling on a pro rata basis.
41. Providers must use the funding to support the students in most need of the intervention, as described in their Delivery Plans, and are not bound by the parameters used for the funding methodology.

## **2025/26 monitoring and payment arrangements**

42. We will pay 50% of a provider's allocation following approval of their Delivery Plan and end of year monitoring report for 2024/25. The final 50% of the allocation will be paid subject to satisfactory 2025/26 interim monitoring, on condition that a provider has committed at least 75% of the first payment.
43. The funding is made available subject to the general conditions for payment of funds by Medr to the Governing Body of an institution. These are set out in the 2025/26 Terms and Conditions of funding.

44. An interim monitoring report will be required in February 2026 setting out activity to the end of December 2025, including the number of individuals supported (broken down by students, franchised students and graduates), as well as data on their demographic breakdown. In addition, we will require data on the number of individuals engaged in work related experiences and the number of individuals supported who consider their employability has improved to the point that they are no longer receiving enhanced employability support. Providers are responsible for ensuring that all the information and required data is included in the report, so that there is a robust basis for assessing the impact of the funding and the students' outcomes.
45. An End of Year Report will be required in September 2026 requesting updated information on activity, data and impact of funding to 31 July 2026. A number of case studies will be required, proportionate to the volume of activity funded. The case studies need to be suitable for publication.
46. We will provide templates for the Interim Monitoring Report, End of Year Report and case studies for providers to submit to Medr.
47. Providers will be required to confirm 2025/26 actual expenditure in the End of Year Report. We reserve the right to recover any budget allocation that has not been spent (i.e. paid out) by 31 July 2026. This will not affect a provider's allocation for AY 2026/27.

## Timeline

48. The timetable for the required plan, reports and payments is presented in the table set out below.

Description	Date
Deadline for submission of Delivery Plans	19 September 2025
Payment of 50% of total allocation	On approval of Delivery Plan / End of year Report for 2024/25
Deadline for submission of interim monitoring report	13 February 2026
Payment of remaining 50% of total allocation, on condition that at least 75% of the first allocation has been committed	On approval of Monitoring Report
Deadline for submission of 2025/26 End of Year Report and Case Studies	18 September 2026

## Further information / responses to

49. Providers should submit signed Delivery Plans in Word format to Rachel O’Gorman, [rachel.ogorman@medr.cymru](mailto:rachel.ogorman@medr.cymru) by 19 September 2025. We require Delivery Plans to be approved by the head of the institution.
50. Universities and Grŵp Llandrillo Menai should use the templates at **Annex A** and **Annex B**; Grŵp NPTC and Gower College Swansea should use the template at **Annex C**, recognising the different approach and level of funding provided.
51. For further information, contact Emma Mock [emma.mock@medr.cymru](mailto:emma.mock@medr.cymru) or Rachel O’Gorman [rachel.ogorman@medr.cymru](mailto:rachel.ogorman@medr.cymru).

## Assessing the impact of our policies

52. We have carried out an impact assessment to help safeguard against discrimination and promote equality. We anticipate a positive impact on race, sex, disability, age, religion and belief. We also considered the impact of this policy on the Welsh language, Welsh language provision within the HE sector in Wales, socio-economic characteristics and potential impacts towards the goals set out in the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

# Medr

Y Comisiwn Addysg Drydyddol ac Ymchwil  
Commission for Tertiary Education and Research

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